

**Linda Clair**  
**Seven-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – March 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 1c – Saturday afternoon discussion**

Question: Sometimes when I'm sitting, the tremors that I get – the same as I do when I do trembling – they start up in my body. Do I let them do what they want to do and let them finish, or do I sort of tense my muscles and stop?

Linda: How often are they happening and for how long?

Question: Maybe three times a week. They last probably about three minutes.

Linda: Oh, that's fine.

Question: So just let them go?

Linda: Yes, I'd say it's just a natural bodily release.

Question: Yes, I was just trying to relate that to keeping still and which one I had to do.

Linda: Well, sometimes that happens when you are very still. It allows something to come up in your body and you will feel that.

Question: No, it's not all the time or anything.

Linda: If you were doing it all through a sit I'd say try and keep a bit still. But no, that's good, it will actually be good for you.

Question: I was just wondering, when you say to go deep within – how to do that? I was looking at it more closely and I was trying to locate, or tune into the silence, or stillness within. Is that what you mean?

Linda: Not necessarily. I know in some practices they say to do that, but if you start to do that you can be subtly repressing stuff that does need to come up, and to feel that you should be feeling really still and really silent. There are different levels of stillness and silence, and often when you are very still, things will naturally come up. It doesn't mean that you're not still or silent; it's because you're stiller that they are coming up.

When I was saying that before, I was saying it more in relation to during this retreat, outside these discussion periods, for everyone to make a bit of extra effort to be a bit more self-contained, and not diffuse the energy by interacting with people, even non-verbally. Of course, sometimes we'll need to talk in the kitchen, but keep it to a minimum. And as N. said, we don't want anyone talking to Sun, even to say, "Oh, that was great, that was really nice." Just leave him alone. Any comments about the food, go to N..

There are all these different ways of distracting yourself by using people, and subtle interactions with people. I don't want to be too heavy about it and say you've got to be really serious – there is a balance – but particularly the first few days of a retreat, you need to set the tone and set the foundation, and build this foundation. If you're really firm for the first few days it affects the whole retreat.

So that doesn't mean to be incredibly serious and heavy about it, it doesn't need to be heavy. And you need to realise, "I'm here because I want to be here, nobody has made me be here." So I feel this retreat it would be good to make a bit of extra effort to watch your reaction.

Question: Yes, I've heard you and other people say similar things before about looking within. Sometimes I feel like I'm in a place where I'm looking within or in a deeper place, but I'm not entirely sure how to get there.

Linda: Well, just keep coming back to your body. Particularly when you're not sitting too – make that effort. When you go past someone, you want to smile, be polite – look at that habit. It's quite freeing when you don't have to do that and everyone has got permission to do that and you don't feel like you're being rude. If I don't look at someone or smile at them, it's not that I'm being rude. But it takes energy, it does take energy to do that. I'm saying keep your energy for this. Keep every bit of energy you've got and put it into this. Don't waste your energy socialising because it's not a social camp. (laughing) We will be socialising in a way, just being here in this group. It's a very strong thing that happens and by the end everyone's in love with everyone else, sort of, in a way.

Question: When I sat on the first sit, I just heard something that you've said in the past, about when you were doing your practice you would at the beginning of the sit say something like, "Bring it on." Surprisingly, that feeling, or those words, went through me at the beginning of the sit, and what came with it was this feeling of, "I don't care about sweating, I don't care about pain or anything. I just want to stop loafing around." Is that what you mean? Or did you mean something internal?

Linda: No, I meant that. It's why often at the beginning of a retreat I try to be pretty firm about it, because you can't just loaf around and do this – you're not going to get results, things aren't going to happen – you have to be incredibly firm. So that's what I used to do: just sit there and go, "Okay, I'll just take whatever is thrown at me and do my best to stay here." And sometimes I'd get really disturbed by it and other times it was like, "Yes, bring it on, just do it." So yes, you have to be really firm about this, really firm.

Question: I've heard you say that every thought starts as a sensation, and I was just wondering how to use that because I think I have experienced it during some of my sits. For example, you're there at the belly and then something happens in your neck, and then you go to the neck and then you get distracted, and the whole chain of thoughts starts. So is it true that every thought starts as a sensation? And how to use that to be more centred, or just to be more aware, or be just here rather than going away with the thoughts?

Linda: Well, use the sensations just to keep your attention in your body as much as possible. Every time you do that your consciousness will quicken – maybe just subtly and maybe just little bit by little bit – but your consciousness will quicken.

I'd say don't look for the source of the thoughts, don't look for anything. Watch, and when you notice that there's a reaction to a sensation – which is a thought – as soon as you realise that bring your attention back. Bring it back as quickly as you can, but without a jolt; it's more, "Okay, come back to my body." Really use your body.

The way you use sensations, the way you feel sensations, the way you see sensations, will start to change. I know for most of my life I used to use sensations as a way of, mainly, trying to feel pleasure. When I started to realise that they weren't there just to feel pleasure it became really fascinating, because I was using pleasure, and sensations to feel pleasure, as a way of avoiding pain, or putting it off or whatever. That really lowered my pain threshold, my ability to feel pain. You're going to feel some pain in the body while you're in the body.

It's a different way of using your sensations. Just use your eyes to see, use your ears to hear. You feel things, you still have those sensations. If something's too hot, you don't put your hand on it, things like that. You start to use your sensations more practically. That does not mean that you don't feel pleasure, but that's not the aim of feeling the sensation.

So keep it as simple as you can and just use the sensations, whatever they are, whether they're pleasurable or not, to stay in your body, to be in your body. And as the retreat goes on the sensations can become at times quite extreme either way. So it helps you in a way because it forces you into your body, to be in your body. But it also can be quite disturbing at times too because there's this very strong belief that pain is bad, pleasure is good. So do your best, whatever you're doing, whether you're here or not here, walking around, eating, to just be in your body.

Question: Linda, what do you have to say about gratitude? What does it mean for you?

Linda: For me?

Question: Yes, or what should it mean for us, if anything?

Linda: Can you make it more specific?

Question: Do you experience what you would call gratitude at any time, or have you?

Linda: Yes, I'd say it's there all the time, not for anything in particular. I mean I feel grateful to be in this state – incredibly, incredibly grateful. But that includes being grateful for everything that's ever happened in my life, everything, whether I see it as good or bad or painful or whatever, because I realise that everything has brought me to this place. I feel grateful that this state is not fixed, that it just keeps deepening, things keep changing. I can say I'm grateful for individual things – but really, I'm just grateful to be here.

Question: Is there an opposite to gratitude? What is it?

Linda: Well, eventually there's not, but until that point, yes – non-acceptance. There are opposites until there are not. But with real gratitude, no there's not an opposite. And I didn't feel real gratitude – the reality of gratitude – until I realised what it was. Then there were no opposites to anything, there was no this and that, it all became one. So there was just gratitude, which is

acceptance of everything. Once you can accept everything that is gratitude – be grateful for everything – there's just gratitude.

Question: Because at some level you experience it as good?

Linda: Not necessarily. I see that everything that happens – and it doesn't mean that I enjoy everything or I don't whinge sometimes – but there's a knowledge, more and more and more, that whatever happens is taking me more deeply into now, into this.

Question: And that's good?

Linda: That's a bit of an understatement. (laughing) It's the most amazing thing, it's not just good. Good is not adequate to describe it, it's everything, nothing compares to it. You could say it's good but it's so much more, or so much less.

For the first twenty-four hours you might have mixed feelings about being here. That's quite normal if you feel that. So just use this time to settle in. Some of you might want to pace yourselves, others will want to get straight into it, so just do whatever you feel – there are no rules here. In that regard, it's totally up to you. But I know there's nowhere else I'd rather be.